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What to Watch For in Coming Months

Senate Majority Leader Alerts the American People

The Golden Age of radio having passed, it has come to our attention that many Americans did not hear Saturday's radio address by Senator Trent Lott who warned the American people about the political shenanigans and partisan games that the President and his allies are planning for the fall. To help disseminate the Majority Leader's important and timely remarks we are publishing them here.

This is the busiest time of year on Capitol Hill. This is when we draft, debate, amend, and finally enact into law the appropriations bills that pay for the operations of your government. They cover everything from salaries for the Armed Forces to fire-fighting in our national forests. Those bills not only spend hundreds of billions of dollars; they can also fine-tune government policies in everything from welfare to the environment.

That makes them easy targets for any faction that wants to tie up the Congress in knots.

During the same period of time before the November elections we need to pass legislation that will help us fight decisively against drugs and juvenile crime, stop the current abuse of bankruptcy laws, and combat religious persecution in places like Sudan where Christians are suffering terribly. At the same time, we'll be finishing up major legislation regarding education and job training.

All of that comes on top of what we have already accomplished in this 105th Congress — the tax cuts and the balanced budget that have set the stage for continuing economic growth, good jobs and greater prosperity. We also reformed the IRS and passed a bill to provide better and safer roads throughout America.

We can — and we will — finish that job, including, if I have my way, another round of tax reductions for hard-working Americans. But it won't be easy, and I want you to know why.

I want you to know in advance what we're up against, so you won't be surprised by some political shenanigans that seem to be already in the works.

Now, every sports fan knows the meaning of the phrase "run out the clock." It's what a team might do when it's winning the game and just wants to stall things so the other side can't even get an opportunity to score.

Here in Washington, however, things often work backwards. Here, it is the losing team — President Clinton and his allies on Capitol Hill — who try to run out the clock. They've done it in past years and it looks like they're at it again.

Here's how it works: Months before the end of the government's fiscal year (that officially comes at midnight on September 30th), Senate Democrats start to s-l-o-w things down, dragging out debate, filibusters, using procedural objections to stop progress, postponing action a few days here and a few days there, and all the while crying crocodile tears about a "do-nothing Congress."

Sound familiar? It should. It's started already. And the downbeat of the slowdown has been set by the President himself.

In all my years in government, I cannot remember a time, except during the final months of the Watergate tragedy, when the President of the United States was so disengaged, so personally removed from the work of the Congress. Whatever the reason, President Clinton has chosen to become a bystander to the hard work of advancing the nation's business. His highly publicized executive orders, foreign visits, and frequent Rose Garden ceremonies may be good media publicity, but they aren't good leadership.

The President's detachment fits right in with the slow-down tactics of his Congressional supporters, and all points to a common goal. That goal is to create a legislative logjam by October 1 — a logjam that can only be broken by giving President Clinton more of your money to spend in ways that you probably don't want it to be spent.

This tactic worked once or twice in the past. It worked because it caught everyone by surprise. By the time the public had a chance to figure out the Democrat's strategy, the game was already over, at a cost to the taxpayers of billions of dollars.

That's why this year I want to blow the whistle on the game and do it well in advance — starting right now. That's why I am appealing to you, the American people. I am asking you to pay careful attention to the news coming out of Washington over the next three months. Pay close attention to our efforts to protect the interests and the pocketbooks of the American worker and the American family. Watch closely to see who is trying to lower your tax burden and who is defending the current tax system. Watch closely to see who is trying to keep the budget in the black and who wants to smash the national piggy bank again for yet another trip to the liberal candy counter.

If you keep a sharp eye on the legislative action or inaction behind the headlines, you will be able to figure out who is trying to score one for the American people and who is just trying to run out the clock.